



Fanfiction by CaraNo

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~Written for J~

Inspired by an ad found in the I Saw U column in Folio Weekly

MOHAWK MAN WITH TODDLER Covered in tats, snakebites
holding your precious angel, her name tatted on your skull.
When u left you mouthed the words: you are so beautiful to
me ... why didn't u come back to ask for my number? Why
April 30. Where: KFC/Taco Bell. #1334-0508

I Saw U

1

BPOV

As soon as I've paid for our food, I adjust my wild child on my hip and playfully bite his cheek. "Will you count for us, honey?" I personally hate coming to this place, but Justin loves it. It's one of those Taco Bell and KFC combo restaurants, and it's *so friggin' loud*. And crowded.

The only good thing—other than delicious burritos—is that they give you a free \$5 dollar worth meal if they don't deliver what you've ordered within ninety seconds, starting as soon as you've paid.

"One, two, free, fow!" My son proudly holds up four fingers in my face.

"Perfect," I giggle and pop a kiss on his nose.

He's turning three tomorrow, which means he considers himself a big boy.

In my opinion, he'll always be my baby, but he does take after my brother in looks and build, so I guess he'll be huge one day.

"Look, we're leaving Jacksonville tomorrow. We can deal with this when we get home," the man behind me says, sounding frustrated. He's been on the phone since he got in line five minutes ago, and he's got a hot-as-hell New York accent. "No, me and Willow are gonna get som'n to eat—Jesus Christ, I'll call you later, T."

Justin and I make funny faces at each other.

"Enjoy your meal." Our food appears—unfortunately before the ninety-second limit—so I grab the tray with one hand and thank the girl before making my way through the crowd. And once the crowd thins, I spot my sister-in-law and nephew at a table.

Justin and I have spent the day apartment hunting, so we're late to our weekly playdate with Rose and Adrian. That's why they're already halfway through their meal when I sit down.

"Took you guys long enough," she teases.

"Hey, Adwrian!" Justin's happy to see his cousin.

"Hi, Justin!" Adrian waves from across the table.

Rose and I found out we were pregnant at the same time, so our sons are the same age. In fact, Adrian turned three last weekend.

"I hate apartment hunting," I sigh and slide over my boy's food to him.

He drenches his potato wedges in ketchup.

"I know you do, hon." Rose offers a sympathetic smile. Lowering her voice, she adds, "But you know I'm glad *he's* out of your life now."

Amen to that.

Jasper was all sweet and chivalrous the first two years; then I got pregnant, and he got cold feet. When Justin was born, Jasper halfheartedly proposed to me—his way of promising that he'd be there for us—but I was smart enough to say no. We lived together, but I could feel it wasn't going to last. And it didn't. Jasper coped for another two years, and then he bailed.

He wrote *Sorry* on a note and left for LA. He'd also gone behind my back to relinquish his rights to Justin; all I had to do was sign the multiple dotted lines. But whatever. I'm actually relieved. The only thing that sucks right now is that I can't afford the apartment we lived in together. I've struggled for a year, but I can't anymore. For the past two months, Justin and I have lived with my parents.

Rose and Em tell me to sue Jasper for child support, but truth be told, I want to cut my losses completely. We'll do fine on our own. As long as I can find an apartment a little cheaper than the last.

"And let me know when you're ready to get out there again." Rose smirks slyly. "Tyler at work can't stop talking about you."

I scrunch my nose. "The computer geek?" Okay, nothing wrong with computer geeks, but this dude's hobby...

"Hey!" She pretends to look insulted. "I work in IT, too."

"Yeah, and you skydive and swim with sharks in your spare time." I give her a look and then wipe some ketchup off Justin's cheek. "Didn't you tell me Tyler collects soda bottle caps?"

My life as a single mother and a preschool teacher sure isn't adventurous, but I do have standards. I want someone who is carefree and funny. Someone who maybe shares my love for children or going to concerts or riding motorcycles or photography or... The list is actually pretty long. But collecting soda bottle caps isn't on it.

"Yeah, he does." Rose spares Tyler a thought and says, "Bless his heart." And then she changes the topic. Apparently she and Emmett are gonna try for kiddo number two soon, and that definitely brightens my day. My brother has always wanted a big family.

Admittedly, I'm also a little envious, but I hope my time will come. I'm only twenty-six, so...

The next subject, while the boys talk animatedly about Adrian's new tree house, is this summer. As usual, there will be a trip to Disney World, but we'll decide the rest—usually day trips—together sometime soon. It's something we do as a family each year.

"Oooh, Bella." Rose suddenly leans forward and grins. "Sexy guy checking you out at three o'clock."

Considering we're next to a wall, I presume it's my three o'clock and not Rose's. So, I dutifully—and subtly—look to my right. *Fuck me.* Sexy guy, indeed. About twelve feet or so away. Right now he's not looking my way; he's helping his...I guess it's his daughter 'cause they look really alike...with her cinnamon twists. In other words, ogling time for me. He's a muscular man, almost bulky. Maybe in his late twenties or early thirties. The precious toddler in his lap is almost engulfed by his protectiveness. A copper-colored mop of hair styled into a disheveled mohawk. Well-worn jeans with a couple holes. A black t-shirt, revealing impressive arms and lots of tattoos. Black boots. It says "Willow" on the side of his neck, and when I hear him say something to his daughter, it dawns on me that it's the man who was behind me in line earlier.

A beat later, he picks up a buffalo wing, but before he can sink his teeth into it, he tilts his head in my direction, catching me.

God.

Stormy green eyes hold me captive, and I bite down on my bottom lip as his mouth curves into a lazy smirk. Hot, hot, hot. I spy snakebite piercings as well as a barbell in his right eyebrow.

I have a feeling he doesn't collect soda bottle caps.

"Mommy!" Justin hollers. "All done wiv my chicken!"

Right before I face my son, the man's eyes soften and his smirk warms into a smile.

I shiver and give Justin my attention.

"Good boy." I kiss the top of his head, still a bit dazed, and widen my eyes at Rose.

She grins. "Yeah, I didn't miss that. Talk about tension."

"Right?" I run my fingers through my hair, feeling flustered. And even more so when I look left again and find the man still staring. *Shit*. He chuckles, though I don't hear it, and my cheeks heat up.

"I hope you get each others' names before you jump into bed," Rose drawls, eyes twinkling with amusement when I face her. She winks. "I take it Tyler's forgotten?"

I laugh. "Tyler who?"

She cracks up and is about to speak, but something to her side distracts her. "Damn. He's leaving, Bella," she whispers.

Turning, I see that she's right. The sexy man has already disposed of the trash from their meal, and he's now throwing his giggling daughter over his shoulder. That heart of mine sinks as he moves toward the exit.

My spirits are lifted, though, when he looks my way and smiles.

Come back and ask for my number!

"You're so beautiful," he mouths.

"Oh..." I exhale, heart thundering, "...my...God."

"Hot damn." Rose fans her face, and I only meet her gaze for a second, but it's sadly enough. 'Cause when I look over my shoulder toward the man again, he's gone.

I grit my teeth and pout at the same time. "How could he?" I whine. "Why ruin me and then just leave?"

Rose suddenly looks determined. "I'll watch the kids. Chase down that fu—" She clears her throat. "Man."

I beam at her and leave my seat, hurrying toward the exit. On the way, I fluff my hair, adjust my tits, and wish I'd worn something sexier. But if he thinks I'm beautiful in skinny jeans and a simple tank top, then fine. Pushing the door open, the late April sun hits my eyes, and I shield them as I peer left and right. *Desperate, Bella?* For that guy—hell yeah. But I can't see him anywhere. My mood dims. The traffic is heavy, cars coming and going in every direction. No sign of Hot Guy and his angel.

When I return to our table, the pout is back.

~oOo~

A month passes; life goes on, I've finally found an apartment, work is busy, and my family keeps me occupied when I'm not working. Yet...my mind tends to travel back to that day in April when I saw that man.

I ask questions nobody I know can answer. Does he live nearby? What's his name? Is he a single father? I recall the New York accent and wonder...was he only here on vacation? Because as my minds spins, itching for info, I do remember that he said something along the lines of leaving Jacksonville the day after.

"You're frowning, kiddo." Mom throws an arm around me and steers me in the direction of kitchen utensils. "Only a month 'til you move into your new place—lots to do."

I plaster a smile on my face and push the cart down the center aisle of Target.

"Do you remember my friend Esme? From my book club?"

I hum, not really caring. My mom is always trying to fix me up, so I assume that's what she's doing now, too. But Mom's weird, 'cause while she wants me to find Mr. Right, she doesn't like that I'm moving out—again. She and Dad want Justin and me to stay longer. Hell, they'd like it if Em and Rose and Adrian moved in, too.

"Well, she has a son..."

I tune out and pick out a Crock-Pot.

~oOo~

Later that week, Justin and I drive over to Em and Rose's for a barbecue. My brother has just bought a new grill, and he wants to show it off.

But once I've ooh'd and aah'd appropriately, I move to the kitchen to help Rose with the salad. The kids are running around in the backyard, so we've got some much-appreciated alone time. And she knows I'm sorta pining for Hot Guy.

In my fantasies I've also dubbed him Mohawk Man, Snakebite, and "I'm coooooommming!"

"Have you tried putting out an ad?" she asks as she starts slicing a cucumber.

Focusing on mixing the potato salad, I barely give her a glance. "Like one of those 'I Saw U' columns?" Sometimes I read the ads in *Folio Weekly*, but I doubt those ever work.

"Exactly like that, yeah." She shrugs. "I mean...it couldn't hurt, right?"

So, that's exactly what we do after dinner while Emmett entertains the boys with video games. Rose and I sit down with her laptop on the patio, and I try to fit in my words using...well, few words. Damn character limits.

I try to maintain a healthy dose of skepticism, but hope spikes up anyway.

After twenty minutes of deliberating and going back and forth, my message is done.

Mohawk man with toddler. Covered in tats, snakebites, holding your precious angel, her name tatted on your neck. When u left you mouthed the words: you are so beautiful: to me...why didn't u come back and ask for my number? When: April 30. Where: KFC/Taco Bell #1334-0508

Here goes nothing.

2

EPOV

I debate whether to change the radio station or not, but I know if I do, Willow's gonna scream like a fucking banshee. CJ's laughing, thinking she's cute as hell, and she fucking is—for a baby stripper. But I gotta do inventory on the bar's wine glasses and tumblers. So...I guess I'll just leave my two-year-old to her dancing to Rihanna's "Rude Boy."

Shaking my head, I turn away from the floor and face the bar rack; unfortunately, the mirrored glass behind the shelves still gives me a view of her. She's spinning around, wearing only her diaper and little sneakers, and she's shaking her butt to a singer who for some un-fucking-known reason can't stop singing about her sex life.

She's all outta breath, pushing away the hair she inherited from me from her face. Bluish green eyes happy and chubby hands flailing to the beat.

"Dada! Lookie! Lookie me!" She does a hip-check and bobs her head.

Too fucking cute.

"I'm lookin', angel." I shake my head in amusement and start counting the glasses.

"You can dance just like Rihanna, sweetheart!" CJ praises. I give him a look, but he's focused on the baby girl and the manual for our new cash register. "And maybe when you grow up, you can entertain—"

"Yo, I dare you to finish that sentence," I threaten.

He smirks and holds his hands up. "Too far?"

I glare. "Ya think?" *Douche.*

Maybe going into business with my cousin wasn't the best idea. Nah, it was. He's cool. But he can also get on my fucking nerves. And I think it's 'cause he's a lot like me.

We grew up together back in New York—Staten Island—but his parents, Carlisle Sr. and Esme, wanted to move to a warmer place when CJ graduated from high school. So, that was it for a while. They moved down here, and I stayed back in New York for college and, later on, work. It wasn't 'til my nana moved down, too—almost three years ago—that I started thinking about packing up my shit as well. But at that point, the woman I'd been seeing casually for a few months told me she was knocked up.

That put everything on hold, including my dream of opening a bar.

My little oops baby.

I knew what I getting into, though, so I won't complain. Bree told me from the beginning that she didn't want children, and that was her choice. I wouldn't be able to give up the baby, fetus stage or not, so I was just grateful she agreed to go through with the pregnancy before she bowed out. No hard feelings, really.

My grandmother offered—almost insisted—to move back to help me, but I managed to talk her out of it. Sure, we struggled for a while; I was

working two jobs, but we coped. I know I'd feel worse if Nana had helped us more—what with her arthritis and all. But we're here now. Sunny Florida. And the bar I'm opening with CJ in a couple weeks is my own dream come true.

For the past few months, Willow and I have flown down here to prepare everything. A weekend here and a weekend there. Our house is ready, I'll die before the mortgage is paid, I've found a sitter for Willow—my Aunt Esme, actually—every shipment is in order, and New York is officially history. Good riddance—kinda. Okay, the broad I was seeing for a while...she's the one who makes me wanna say good riddance. Whatta fuckin' nutcase.

Tia Sanchez, sweetheart on the outside; crazy bitch on the inside. Thankfully, I went with my gut instinct and never left her alone with Willow. We only saw each other for about five months, yet she had our entire future mapped out. She finally got it in the end—that I was moving down here—and I haven't heard from her in about six weeks now. I think the last I saw of her was when I returned from my last Jacksonville trip, and she was packing up the shit she'd kept at my place.

But back to Aunt Esme...she's supposed to be here soon to take Willow so CJ and I can focus on the furniture that's currently piled up along the walls. The four booths will take the longest to get ready, but we should be able to fix all the high-top tables and stools today.

"Dada! Knock, knock!"

Turning around, I see that the baby girl's pointing to the door.

I crack a grin and round the bar, walking over to pick her up. "You can be our little doorman, angel." I blow a raspberry on her cheek as I head to the door.

"Dow," she giggles.

"Yeah—door." Opening the door, I let a beaming Esme in. "How ya doin', Es?" I smile and kiss her cheek.

"Nana'sme!"

"That's right, baby," Esme coos and holds out her arms for Willow. "Nana Esme's here." With my daughter on her hip, she grins up at me and says, "Just the man I wanted to see."

"Did you bring som'n to eat, Ma?" CJ hollers from the bar, acting like a nine-year-old instead of a *twenty-nine-year-old*.

Esme rolls her eyes and ignores him. "So, Edward. I have something for you." She sticks her free hand into her purse and pulls out a folded piece of paper. I raise my eyebrows and accept it. "Last night, I heard a friend of mine talking about her daughter—actually—" she snorts a laugh "—I wanted her to meet CJ, but..." Another eye-roll. And a wry grin. "I have a feeling this girl's already found someone."

Completely fuckin' clueless about what she's talking about, I unfold the paper and see that it's a copied page of a local newspaper. A closer look tells me it's probably nothing I'm interesting in. "Personal ads, Es? Really?" I'm not looking for a girlfriend. There's one broad who keeps me company during my morning showers when I rub one out, but I got too much shit on my plate for more than that. I'm fine with fantasies for now.

I have a way of attracting the batshit crazy ones, so...

"Read the third one." She points. "It might sound familiar. It was posted two weeks ago, so I hope you're not too late."

Brows knitting together, I look down at the paper again and read the third ad.

Mohawk man with toddler. Covered in tats, snakebites, holding your precious angel, her name tatted on your neck. When u left you mouthed the words: you are so beautiful: to me...why didn't u come back and ask for my number? When: April 30. Where: KFC/Taco Bell #1334-0508

A slow smile stretches across my lips, and I shake my head in disbelief.

I'll be fucking damned.

Yeah, there's no forgetting that beauty. And the things she does to me in my head—fuhgedabouddit. But I can't believe she went so far as to look for me. I made that much of an impression, huh? Then again, so did she with me. At first, all I saw was this hot piece of ass standing in front of me in line—tight, bubbly, and in those fucking jeans, man...*Christ*. Just remembering that ass makes my teeth itch.

Her musical laugh had eventually made me look up, and I remember the little boy—her son—she was carrying. They appeared to be making funny faces to each other; meanwhile, I was arguing with Tia on the phone. I shake my head, eyes on the ad again. *You're so beautiful*. Yeah, I blew it there. I shoulda fuckin' talked to her. But...shit, with all the things I had going on...

But the memory of her face when she spoke to her friend and the two kids does shoot a load of regret into me. I spent nearly the entire meal staring at her. And her spectacular tits. Thankfully, I had my girl on my lap, so I can't say I was battling a hard-on. This daddy's alone time that followed is another matter.

"The man is you, isn't it?" Esme asks softly.

I huff a little laugh, smiling to myself, and nod with a dip of my chin. "Uh, yeah." I brush the pad of my thumb across my bottom lip, thinking. "Did you say you know this girl?" I hold up the paper.

The thought of seeing her again sends a jolt of excitement through me.

She smirks. "Well, I know her mother. We're in the same book club."

"What's her name?" I blurt out.

"Her mother?" She smiles coyly.

I give her a look, feeling impatient all of a sudden. "Don't play dumb with me, Es."

"Ay! Manners." She sucks her teeth.

"Mannuhs!" Willow mimics with a stern expression. She even wags a chubby finger at me.

I can't help but laugh, and I kiss her finger. "Fine. I'm sorry. I mean the woman's name."

"It's Isabella." Esme smiles. "But I think she goes by Bella."

"Bella," I repeat with a small grin. Yeah. That's it.

What happened to not being interested right now?

That was before this. Before Bella.

"She's not crazy, is she?" I ask and rub the back of my neck.

"Who's crazy?" CJ appears next to me, throwing a rag over his shoulder.

"Isabella Swan, and she's definitely not crazy," Esme scoffs. "Renee's always going on about how sweet her daughter is."

Well, I'm sure crazy people's parents love them. But whatever. I'm gonna go out on a limb here since she was nothing but amazing with her son. She was even...goofy—playful and funny.

"Ah, that's right." CJ nods and grins. "When were you gonna set us up, anyway?"

I smirk and smack the piece of paper to his chest. "Sorry, my friend—but she's off the market." *Read it and weep.* "Third one." With a frown on his face, he studies the paper, and I face Esme again. "Do you know how I can contact her?"

"Either you can contact her through the ad, or you can call Renee Swan."

"Dammit!" CJ scowls and hands back the paper. "What about me, huh?"

I chuckle and fake a southern drawl. "Well now, I thought you were sweet on Rosie Palmer and her five sisters." I wiggle my hand.

He glares.

Esme gasps. "Cawlisle Juniuh! Are you really dating six women?! What's wrong wit'chu?!"

"Ha!" I start laughing. CJ should be so lucky.

"It's not—God...Jesus, Mom." CJ palms his face. "He's talking about my damn hand."

"Oh." My aunt obviously doesn't know how to respond to that, which makes me laugh harder. "Right." She waves it off. "Edward, do you want Renee's number or not?"

Still laughing, I nod. Damn fucking straight, I want her number.

~oOo~

When Willow's out for the count that night, I grab a beer and hop up on the kitchen counter, phone next to me and Renee Swan's digits in my wallet.

Admittedly, I've made up excuses all night for not making the call yet, but after a day of thinking about Bella, there's been some second-guessing. I mean, we saw each other a month and a half ago; then she posted this ad two weeks ago. Either she's got patience of a saint, or...well, I can't fucking blame her if she's stopped hoping. It was a long shot, anyway. For her, I mean. To post the ad.

But if she was courageous enough to go that far, I can't pussy out just because she might've given up. Now it's my turn to chase.

Taking a swig from my beer, I pull out the phone number and dial before I talk myself out of it.

A man with a gruff voice picks up after the second ring. "*Swan.*"

Bella's pops? *Shit.*

I clear my throat. Fuck. My palms are getting sweaty. "Yeah, uh—hi. I'm looking for Renee Swan. She thea'?"

Doesn't look good for a thirty-year-old man to get nervous, does it?

"*Who's asking?*" There's suspicion in his voice.

"Edward Cullen." I cringe. "Sir," I add hastily. I've never ever dealt with parents, so I'm no good at this shit. "My aunt is in Renee's book club—uh, Esme Cullen?"

He grunts. "*All right.*" In the background, I hear him shouting for his wife, and I chug my beer while I wait. And then a woman's voice comes on.

"*This is Renee—oh, Justin! Honey, you can't eat that.*" Justin? I remember Bella saying that name when I was behind her at KFC. "*Charlie, can you help Justin with his bath? I'll be right there.*" She blows out a breath. "*I'm sorry about that. We're watching our grandson for the night.*"

"It's all right," I answer. "My aunt gave me your numbuh." I clear my throat again. "She didn't tell you about me, but I'm Edward Cullen, and I think your daughta' posted an ad about me." I roll my eyes, 'cause there's no "think" about. I'm definitely Mohawk Man, although my mohawk is getting a little shaggy these days. I smirk to myself and fiddle with one of the piercings on my lip, off in dreamland with the Swans' daughter. But a gasp on the other line brings me back to now. "So yeah, I'd like to give Bella a call."

"Wow, this is..." She trails off, maybe in disbelief? *"Unbelievable!"* Or maybe she was just looking for a word.

"Yeah..." I nod even though she can't see me. "So..." *C'mon, lady.*

"Oh! Right. Right. Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to give Esme a quick call to make sure—"

"I respect that," I say quickly, definitely meaning it.

After giving Renee the numbers she can reach me at, we say goodbye for now. She promised to call back right away, so I end up pacing the floor in the kitchen, hoping Esme and Carlisle are home.

Fuck me, Bella's been waiting for six weeks; I can hardly keep my shit together for twenty minutes. But damn it if I don't feel excited as hell. I want my cousin to get a good look at Bella—see how beautiful she is—but with said woman on my arm or whatever. There's no way my aunt is setting those two up. 'Cause, y'know, I saw her first.

Mouthing a few words to her doesn't exactly give you claiming rights.

Fuck that shit. She's mine. I've made her mine over and over in my head.

When the phone rings, I answer too fucking eagerly. "Cullen," I rush out.

Renee's soft laugh filters through, reminding me of her daughter's laugh. She could no doubt hear my anxiousness. But then she stops laughing. And she brings me news I don't fucking approve of.

Apparently Bella's getting ready for a date.

"But..." Renee hesitates; meanwhile, I'm grinding my teeth together. Though, I have no goddamn reason to be pissed. Well, I do. I'm pissed at myself. Yeah okay, and at the motherfucker Bella's going out with. *"It's only seven thirty, so I suppose I could give you her address...? Tyler's picking her up at eight, and Esme told me where you live. You're really not that far away from Bella."*

Oh. *Oh!* Wide-eyed, I turn to the clock on the wall, my mind spinning. Well, fuck me. There might be some sneakiness in Bella's mother. But...what about Willow? It's too late to call my nana, and Esme and Carlisle don't live that close. But I guess...ah, fuck it. I can bring her.

You really shouldn't wake up sleeping toddlers—the windpipes they got, man—but I fucking made her. I get to decide.

"Her address would be perfect," I say firmly.

Before I know it, I'm outta my house, a screaming baby girl with me, a diaper bag over my shoulder, and I realize too late that I'm only wearing a pair of sweats, flip-flops, and a wife-beater. A wife-beater that has stains from smashed bananas and jelly. As if that's not enough, one look in the rearview mirror tells me I've got oatmeal in my hair.

Wow, Bella's really gonna regret searching for me.

"Dadaaaa!" Oh, the wailing and the flailing. "Dadadaaaa!"

"I know, angel. I know. Daddy's an idiot." I back out the Impala and fasten my seatbelt in a rush. Next I locate Willow's pacifier that I'd stuffed

in my pocket earlier; fucking figures, lint all over. "But we're on a mission—we gotta save Princess Bella from the evil, um, ogre." Pulling over by the curb, I put the pacifier in my mouth, grimacing. "Shit, that's nasty." Once it's lint free, I reach back and hand it over to shut up the baby monst—I mean, to make my precious sweetheart quit with the waterworks. "There we go. Can we smile now, honey?" I look at her in the rearview. "Can you smile for Daddy?"

She screams and throws the pacifier at the window.

3

BPOV

7:42 PM

Standing in front of the mirror in the hallway, I release a breath and mentally prepare myself for what Rose talked me into. A date with Tyler. I shake my head at myself, adjust my strapless bra, and apply some nude-colored lipstick. It goes well with the smokey eyes. But maybe I should pick another dress. This little black one screams "I want sex!" and I certainly don't. Well, not with Tyler.

In general, I'm damn horny, though. I've used and abused my vibrator these past six weeks because...because of that fucking Mohawk Man. And before that, I was a regular at Casa de Fuck. That's a magical place in my dreams where several hot stars live, such as Gerard Butler, Ryan Reynolds, Bradley Cooper, and Paul Walker.

"Fuckin' tits," I mutter, adjusting, adjusting, adjusting. They're simply too big for this goddamn dress. And bra, for that matter. After Justin, I didn't get my old perky ones back. They didn't shrink much, either.

7:47 PM

I grab the glass of wine from the hallway table and take one gulp for courage, one for stupidity, and one because it's damn good wine. *You can do this, Bella.* It's just a date. Gotta get back out there and look for Mr. Right. But...will I really find him in a man who collects soda bottle caps?

I make a face and step into the five-inch heels Rose told me to buy.

7:49 PM

Giving my parents a call, I say goodnight to my son and wonder why Mom's acting weird. But there's no time to ponder. I say goodbye, place my cell, my Visa, and my keys into my clutch, and then it's eight o'clock.

"Right on time," I mumble when the doorbell dings. As I pass the mirror, I smack my lips and fluff my hair a bit; then I'm as ready as I'll ever be for dinner with Tyler Crowley.

I open the door with a practiced smile on my face, and there he is. "Hi, Tyler." Make no mistake, he's a very handsome man. African-American, tall, with a swimmer's body, a gorgeous smile, and the kind of black-rimmed glasses that makes you fantasize about male librarians. But...I don't know, I guess I just haven't clicked with him. The one time I met him—when I accompanied Rose to an office party Em couldn't attend—I thought he was pretty boring.

Here's to second chances, though.

"You look stunning, Bella." His wide smile and bright eyes are trained solely on my cleavage. "You ready to go?"

"Yeah." My own smile is becoming more and more strained. I lock the door, and then we walk down the hall toward the exit. Since I live on the first floor, I never have to worry about the less-than-sturdy elevator.

"Where are we going?" I know he's been fishing for clues through Rose as to where to take me, and I'm kinda hoping for Greek, Cuban, or Thai.

He answers as we step outside. "I thought this could be the perfect way for you to get to know me, so we're going to a theme restaurant."

"Oh?" I face him, hoping I'm not showing the apprehension that just settled in my gut. "What kind of theme?"

In the distance, I hear a car screeching.

Tyler beams. "Well, it's Friday, so it's Dungeons & Dragons night."

Fuck apprehension. It's now dread and horror, and I bet I look constipated. "Awesome," I force out. Fake smile, fake smile, fake smile. "You into that, huh? Role-playing?"

"Oh yeah, definitely. Hard-core fan."

Rose, you will pay for this. I swear to God, you will pay.

As we walk toward Tyler's brown Volvo—parked next my truck in the small lot for residents—he tells me his friends will be there tonight, too, and that they're dying to meet me. Also, he hopes we'll play tonight.

When hell freezes over, buddy.

It's a modern world, so I don't *really* care that he doesn't open the door for me. It's just a thought. But whatever. With one foot in, I'm about to sit down when the screeching comes closer. In fact, it ends abruptly; a sleek car is now parked at the curb outside my building.

"Someone you know?" Tyler asks as a linebacker of a man tumbles out.

I narrow my eyes and straighten up, my hand on the car door. Is that a fucking mohawk or are my eyes playing tricks on me? My heart skips a beat, but I squash down the hope. The man jogs to the other side of his car and opens—what the fuck? No. It can't be. A little girl who looks suspiciously like...

"Bella!" The man, who clearly knows my name, walks closer, a screaming baby girl in his arms.

"Oh, my God," I squeak out. It *is* him. It's *him!*

But it can't be!

"There you are." Oh, but it is. It's Mohawk Man, and he looks like a hot mess. He grins as he reaches me. "Damn, honey—you look too hot for a night of babysitting."

"What—but—how," I splutter. *It's you!*

"Bella, who's this?" Tyler asks curtly.

"I, h-he...I, um." Great, now I'm stammering, too.

Pardon me while I die of shock!

Mohawk Man jerks his chin at Tyler. "'Sup? Edward Cullen. And you are?"

"Tyler Crowley." Definitely annoyed. "Bella's *date*."

I can't speak. It's difficult with my jaw on the pavement. I'm still stuck on the fact that Snakebite...Mohawk Man..."I'm coooommming!"...is standing right before me. With his daughter. And speaking in his sexy New York accent. He's so...*daddy hot*. Like a father should look.

"*Really?*" Mohawk—wait. *Edward Cullen*. Yeah, he scratches his chin and looks confused. "Date—tonight? But, Bella..." He frowns. "You promised you were gonna babysit Willow tonight while I work."

My eyes dart between the two men.

"Uh?" is my clever response. It's another squeak.

"Yeah." Edward nods slowly. "And you were gonna let me use your shower before I took off? *Remember?*"

No. I honestly *don't*. Seriously. Have I woken up in some alternate reality?

"Dada," the little girl whines.

"I know, angel." He touches her cheek. "You wanna stay with Bella tonight."

"I..." I look helplessly at Tyler, who's scowling. "Um, maybe I should..." Should *what?* Worry about my own sanity or Edward's?

"Yeah, no, I get it," Tyler grumbles. *He* gets it? Maybe he could tell *me*. 'Cause I don't *get* a fucking thing. "Rain check, Bella?"

"Um." I'm surrounded by question marks. Hell, I *am* one.

"We'll see 'bout that," Edward replies gruffly.

By the time Tyler has driven off, I'm still standing in the tiny parking lot feeling beyond lost.

"Phew..." Edward releases a breath, his shoulders sagging. "Okay, that was probably a douche move on my part, but I couldn't let'chu go out with him."

My eyebrows shoot up.

He smiles sheepishly and sticks out his hand. "Hey, Bella. I'm Edward Cullen." A weird noise erupts from my throat, like a strangled whimper, and I numbly, automatically reach out to shake his hand. His smile warms up. "It's nice to officially meet you."

"Um, sure..." *Yes. Yes, it really is, but...* My brows knit together, and I blow out a breath in frustration. "Mind telling me what the hell is going on?"

He grins. "Of course. You gotta minute? And maybe you should sit down."

I harrumph and start walking back to my building. "Apparently my entire night was just cleared. So yeah, I have a minute." With a wave of my hand, I gesture for Edward to enter first. He does, and...okay, so maybe I check out his ass.

Interesting outfit for a Friday night. Sweats and a stained beater. Flip-flops, even.

I...I actually love it. 'Cause I don't know how often I end up in dirty yoga pants and holey t-shirt after a day with Justin.

Reaching my door, I quickly unlock it and head inside.

"You're more trusting than your motha'," he comments with a frown. "I could be a psycho, you know?" Yeah, the jury's still out on that one. "You shouldn't let me in that easily."

"Noted." I'm too fucked in the head to care right now. But he's right. "So, you know my mom?"

"Not really." He nods when I motion for the living room. "But my aunt does. They're in a book club together or something."

Huh.

"Um...anything to drink?" I ask, feeling out of sorts. This man is standing in the middle of my living room, and I don't know what to make of it. I'd given up on finding him, so to see him now...it's unreal.

"Nah, I'm good." He points to the couch. "Mind if I sit?"

I shake my head. "No, of course. Sit down. I'm just..." I poke my thumb over my shoulder; it's the direction of the kitchen. "I need wine." Lots of it, preferably.

He nods and sits down with his whimpering daughter, who looks emotionally drained and exhausted. Poor little cutie. Hopefully she'll fall asleep soon.

After fetching a new bottle of white and a glass, I join...Edward...and sit down on the other end of the couch.

I'm in a daze, I realize.

"You're here," I say dumbly, still in disbelief.

"Yeah..." He offers a small smile, then laughs through his nose and gives a little shake of his head. "I didn't think this through." At my frown, he elaborates. "My aunt came by my bar today—she showed me the ad you posted?" And my cheeks heat up. He notices but doesn't comment. "She'd heard Renee talk about you, and when she read the ad, she was pretty sure it was about me."

"Oh," I breathe out.

"Yeah, so I called Renee as soon as Willow had fallen asleep tonight. I...I wanted to talk to you." He winces. "She told me you were goin' out on a date."

"Oh," I repeat, filling the glass to the brim. A few greedy gulps follow, and I try to will my heart to slow down.

It doesn't work.

My pulse skyrockets every time I glance at Edward.

"I had no right to interrupt your date—I know that, so..." He clears his throat and runs a hand through his messy hair. "If you kick me out, I totally get it."

I huff a chuckle, finally feeling the tension in my shoulders loosen. I hadn't even noticed I've been all but rigid as a block of ice. "Well, you certainly surprised me." I pause for another sip of wine. "But I'm not ready to kick you out yet." I smirk. "So, what was all this about babysitting?" I wave a hand at the adorable girl in his arms. "By the way, feel free to put her down." The chair next to Edward is one of Justin's favorite places to fall asleep. "You can use my son's blanket."

"Ah, thank you." He smiles and carefully stands up before lowering Willow on the plush chair. Her eyes are already drooping when he covers her with the fleece blanket. "As for the babysitting..." He puffs out his cheeks, slumping down on the couch again, and blows out a heavy breath. "That was my excuse—or yours, to not go on the date." He grimaces. "Fuck, I *really* didn't think this through."

I hide my grin and cock a brow. "And the shower?"

"I panicked," he admits. "I needed a reason to stick around after your date left."

"Sneaky. And rude. But—" I can't help but giggle "—I doubt it'll take long for me to forgive you. Tyler wanted me to go to a restaurant where they role-played. Dungeons & Dragons."

"Ouch." He snickers. "Maybe not the best choice for a date." He hesitates then asks, "First date?"

I nod and bite my lip.

He nods too, slowly. "I see. Still, I'm sorry for just barging in. I guess...I don't know, but when my aunt showed me that ad..." He rubs the back of his neck. "I, uh, got excited. I didn't wanna wait."

My heart melts. "I didn't think anything would come of it. I hoped, but..." I look down at my lap. "I heard you talking on the phone—at KFC, and you

said something about leaving Jacksonville. Plus, with your accent...I didn't think you lived here."

"My accent," he chuckles. "You know, I didn't even know I had one 'til I left New York. My whole family's from there, but we've ended up in Florida somehow. All of us. And, in my opinion, you're the one with an accent."

"I don't have an accent." I laugh and place a hand on my chest. "But you're getting off track now, mister."

"You do," he insists with a smile. "Not Alabama Southern, but still...I don't fuckin' know, like a softer drawl—more subtle. Whatevuh." He laughs quietly and waves it off. And I think he's so damn cute. Ruggedly sexy, the epitome of man, but cute. "Anyway—I moved down here permanently about two weeks ago. When we saw each other, I'd just signed the papers on my new house."

"Wow..." It's gonna take a while to let all this settle. I guess I can't get over that he's really here—I'm that amazed. And even more so to hear that he now lives here, and...well, he's in my living room for a reason, I hope. "And, um—" heat colors my cheeks "—I presume you're single?"

"Ah, yeah." He snorts in obvious amusement. "Bella..."

"I know, I know." Fuck, this man makes me so damn flustered. "Stupid question, maybe. But I noticed that you didn't mention Willow's mom moving down here."

He shrugs. "There's no mom involved. Willow's an oops baby, and the woman I was seeing didn't want kids. She agreed to go through with the pregnancy for my sake, but then she moved away."

I'm torn between sadness, motherly fury, and amusement; the last one is at his choice of word to describe his baby girl. I get that not everybody wants children, so I'm not really judging—far from it—I just can't

understand it myself. But Edward doesn't seem resentful at all, so that relieves me a little.

"What about you?" He jerks his chin. "Does your son live here every other week and then with his dad...?"

I shake my head no. "Justin's dad is of the deadbeat variety. He bailed a year ago."

"Damn," he mutters. "How did your kid take it?"

I smile. "Better than I feared. I suppose it was a good thing Jasper was never really around in the first place." It's my turn to shrug. "We lived together and all, but he worked a lot, and nothing was allowed to come between him and his personal life."

Edward looks at his daughter for a beat, jaw tense, and I feel the need to lighten the tension. Because for some reason it's like we go from uncomfortable to at ease in a heartbeat. It also feels like the ad I posted has now become the elephant in the room—something we skirt around. I have no clue why, but maybe it's because then we'd have to approach the topic of what we want out of this. Even though it's fairly obvious. At least I hope it is.

"I was promised a meal tonight, but that didn't happen." I giggle at his chagrined smile. "I don't know about you, but I'm starving."

"Food sounds good. My treat—"

"Oh, that's definitely not necessary—"

"I'm not asking, Bella." He smirks. "You order; I pay."

I glare at him playfully. "Stubborn."

"I have my moments." He grins. "I'm sure you do, too."

I sniff. "For me to know and you to find out."

"I intend to."

A zing of desire shoots down my spine in reaction to his intense eyes, and I realize it's going to be very difficult to not just jump his fucking bones tonight.

4

EPOV

"...it's just gonna be a simple place for people to hang out and listen to rock—chill, whatevuh." I wave a hand and pick up my bottle of beer. "I'm not into the club scene, so I told my cousin it had to be small and not attract a younger crowd." Maybe it makes me sound old, but I couldn't give two shits about that. "Basically, it's more for bikers than for broads popping pink chewing gum." Bella chuckles. "So...there ya have it." I smile and lean back a little. "It's your turn."

"My turn?" She grins and tosses a pizza crust in the box, then wipes her hands on a napkin. "Not much to tell. I'm a preschool teacher." Yeah, I can see that. It fits her. "I always wanted to work with children, so..." She trails off with a little shrug.

"You like it?" I prod, wanting more. For the past couple hours or so, it feels like I've done all the talking. She's an inquisitive little woman, and I dig that she seems so interested. Fuck, I don't think I've talked this much in ages. I've told her about my family, too—how my parents died when I was a kid, how it was growing up in Staten Island, that I'm very close with my nana—who raised me—not to mention my uncle and his family. Lastly, I've talked about the bar I'm opening with CJ. And Bella's been...I don't know, soaking it up, 'cause her interest has been evident in her eyes, and she doesn't hesitate with follow-up questions.

"Oh yeah, absolutely." She smiles fondly and sips her wine. "Kids that age are so impressionable. I love having an impact on their lives. They're also brutally honest, which is refreshing."

I laugh, nodding. "They hand over the truth, yeah—and not on a silver platter. Just last week, Willow told me, 'Only I sing, Dada. No you.' We were on our way to the beach, and apparently I didn't have a good singing voice. So, I was like, 'Yo, thanks for the love, angel.'"

"Aww! Poor you." She mock-pouts, to which I try not to look at her mouth. Christ, she's too beautiful for words. And she's got these plump, kissable lips that I could just... I groan internally and chug down my beer. I wasn't supposed to drink, but somewhere between pizza slice two and three, Bella told me she had Corona in case I was interested.

I was interested.

Guess I'll just take a cab home later. And that'll give me a reason to come back tomorrow—to get my car.

Willow's hardly gonna complain how we get home. She sleeps like the dead. In Justin's room, actually. Bella offered it to me earlier, and I gladly took her up on it.

"More beer?" she offers, sitting up straighter. "I could go for another glass of wine, too."

"Sure. Thanks." I hand her the empty bottle and wait until she's outta the room before I belch.

See? I got manners.

"Edward?" she calls from the kitchen. I perk up. "You mind if I change into something more comfortable? This dress is killin' me."

Oh, trust me, baby. It's killing me, too.

"Yeah, no, of course." I clear my throat. "Go change." *Feel free to go naked, too.* Earlier when I went to the bathroom, I managed to get the oatmeal outta my hair, but I sure as fuck don't feel refreshed. So, if Bella loses the fancy date-wear, maybe it'll even us out a little. 'Cause right now she's this stunning model-type broad sitting with some beach bum. Okay, she's way too short and curvy to be a model, for which I'm fuckin' thankful. I prefer women who ingest food instead of air.

When Bella returns to the living room, all I can think is...*that's no better than the dress.*

Casual, yes. Cock-hardening, oh that too. Skimpy black cotton shorts ending below her delectable ass and a red t-shirt, a bit too snug for respectable, with a white silhouette of...uh, some dude doing a martial arts move.

"This is so much better," she groans in relief and plops down on the couch—not at the far end this time. Definitely closer to me. A beer and some wine go to the table. But all I can see...

Miles. Of. Fucking. Legs.

Shiny from lotion, sun-kissed...

Jesus Christ.

"What?" And of course she catches me staring. "Is there somethin' wrong?" She checks her legs. "Oh, that." With a soft laugh, she runs a hand over her calf. "It's already fading."

I frown, just now seeing the four-inch yellowing bruise. "What happened?" Without even thinking about it, I scoot closer and splay my hand gently

over the bruise. Which I really shouldn't have done. Fuck me; she's all soft and smooth.

"Justin got a little carried away." She waves dismissively.

My frown deepens, and I look her in the eye.

"Oh, he didn't mean it," she says quickly. "He's just really into that movie—you know, *Karate Kid*?" She grins and points to her t-shirt. And I get it. I relax and snort in amusement. "Justin wanted to do karate, and he accidentally kicked me. He felt so bad that I don't have the heart to wear shorts around him until it's gone."

"Sweetheart, you don't have to explain yourself," I chuckle. "Lemme know when you wanna compare battle scars." Pulling down the neckline of my wife-beater a little, I show Bella a faint scar from about six months ago. "I was gonna give Willow a bath, and she'd been screaming all day, so I wasn't the pleasant self I try to be around her. And she fucking bit me."

"Oh, my God!" she laughs. "What a little spitfire. So friggin' cute, though."

I smile, proud. "She is that," I agree, grabbing my new beer. "She's also a demon."

"What kid isn't?" she teases. "Justin isn't a biter, but he does have a knack for ruinin' my walls. If it's not with finger paint or magic markers, it's with food or dog shit." My eyes bug out. "Yeah, that's happened. Twice."

"Do you even have a dog?" I ask incredulously.

"Nope."

I crack up pretty hard, wondering if it's weird that we're bonding over the crap our kids pull. But then I figure...what parent doesn't have war stories to share?

"He does look like he's got some mischief in 'im," I say, tipping my bottle at the photos by the flat screen on the wall. Justin looks a lot like his mother, but his hair is curlier. He's got dimples, too, and I haven't seen those in Bella.

"Understatement, honey," she drawls softly with a lazy smile. "He has my heart, but handling boys isn't the easiest. I hope one day he'll have—" She stops abruptly only to giggle. "Wow. I think I've had enough wine." She sets the glass on the table; meanwhile, I wonder what she was about to say. "I don't think drunken confessions should be a part of tonight."

I cock my head. "Another night, then?" 'Cause I want her confessions.

"Another night sounds...so...good." Her eyes darken in the dim light, and fuck me if she doesn't lick her lips. Either she's a bit too tipsy or she's deliberately flirting.

I swallow, not wanting to be too eager, not wanting to scare her away.

'Cause I really fucking like this woman.

"So, uh..." I clear my throat—and my head. Well, I try. "Why don't you tell me about, uh—" think fast, think fast, think fast—"—your family!"

She blinks. "You—you wanna talk about my *family*?"

"Sure." Let's go with that. "I've done most the talking tonight, you know? I think it's your turn."

"I'm not usually this quiet." She nibbles on her lip and looks toward the TV.

Gently grabbing her jaw, I make her face me again. "So, why are you tonight?"

"I'm..." She releases a breath. Her hands on her lap ball into tight little fists. "I'm distracted." A huff. "By you."

I frown. "I'm...sorry?" I let go of her chin.

"No. I'm the one who should be apologizing." She stands up and begins to pace in front of the TV. "You're being so sweet, and you're sharing stories about your life with me, and all I can think of is—" She grits her teeth and fists her hair. "Fuck!" My eyebrows shoot up in surprise. Then she faces me with fire in her eyes. "You know what, Edward Cullen? It's your damn fault!" What the fuck? "For six *fucking* weeks, I've fantasized about you. The words you mouthed to me? I've had that memory going on repeat more times than I can count." *Holy. Fucking. Shit.* "And then you come into my life like the sexiest fucking hurricane, and, and—" She suddenly chokes on a sob, which catapults me into horror and shock. "And I'm tired," she says frantically, blinking back tears. "I'm *exhausted*, and being a single mother is so *hard*. For *one* goddamn night, I just wanna be...*fucking ravished*." I cough and splutter, eyes growing wide. "I don't wanna think about consequences or act appropriately or worry about how I look." She waves a hand at me. "I mean, look at *you!* You sit there in a dirty beater and sweats, and you still come off as a *fucking god*." My jaw drops next. "How is that fair? And now *I* come off as certifiably insane, and I'm *sorry*. I'm *so* sorry, but this night hasn't been easy for me. Okay? But do you know what I want?"

I shake my head dumbly, beyond stunned.

"I want a man, Edward," she says with desperation in her voice. "I want to be able to wear filthy yoga pants and still get fucked six ways to Sunday. But I don't get that. 'Cause I have to dress up, put on makeup, and wear heels that kill. They kill, Edward. I swear, they *fucking* kill."

Shock finally wearing off, I stand up and slowly make my way toward her.

"I'd make a good girlfriend—wife, whatever." She waves herself off and continues her sexy-as-fuck rant. "I'd dress up for my man; I'd prance around in skimpy lace, and I give good fucking head. I'm even a good cook! And I don't mind sports. Much. I'll even watch if FSU has a game. But I *hate* dressing up for nothing and go out with losers who—I mean, do I *look* like I give a shit about Dungeons & Dragons? *Do I?*" I shake my head no, struggling to withhold my smile. She's spectacular—that's all I can say. She claims that children are honest, but dammit all to hell, so is she. "Okay, so maybe I'm only twenty-six; my dad tells me there's time, and I know there is, but how does that help me get laid?" She throws up her hands just as I reach her. "I just—I just..." Her chest heaves as she peers up at me.

"You just what?" I murmur, moving my hands up her arms.

"I...I..." She swallows and her eyes flick to my mouth.

That's fuckin' it.

Cupping her neck, I dip down and take her mouth with mine. It's not gentle or fucking sweet. It's possessive and goddamn mind-blowing. I stroke her tongue with mine, lips completely locked.

"I'm not really crazy," she moans into the kiss. "It's you—I can't help myself. Oh, fuck yes..." I suck her bottom lip into my mouth and roughly palm her luscious ass. "All night, I've thought about just ripping your clothes off and licking every damn tattoo on your body—"

"Jesus Christ," I hiss, pressing my cock against her stomach. "That's a lotta tattoos, baby."

"I have time."

That triggers something feral in me, and I groan before instinct kicks in. My hands slide down to the backsides of her thighs, and then I pick her up, hitching her legs around me. Our kiss never falters, never stops.

One thing I notice is that she smells and tastes fucking amazing, but I sincerely doubt I do. So...

First stop: the shower.

~oOo~

For such a tiny piece of woman, Bella's packin' some serious strength, and I moan when she shoves me against the wall in the shower to basically jump my bones. The hot water cascades down our slick bodies, but it has nothing on the heat Bella's hands and mouth provide. Clinging to me, pushing those full tits against me, she licks, kisses, and bites. Her fingers dig in, her nails scratch, and...I could just lose it. But I don't want to embarrass myself, so I turn the tables on her fairly quickly.

"My turn," I growl, spinning her around. I cage her in the corner of the shower and go for her neck, sucking and nipping. My hands cup her tits, smashing them together; she cries out and throws her head back. "Fuck, you're sexy," I mutter against her skin. Kissing my way down, I end up on my knees in front of her, and I don't even fucking ask. I just tell her, "Find somethin' to hold onto." Then I hike her legs over my shoulders and bury my face in her pussy.

"God, Edward!"

My tongue delves deep, a groan of hunger reverberating from my chest in reaction to her taste. I'm not even gonna try to describe it; I'm too busy getting addicted. I nuzzle her clit, breathing in her own scent combined with her body wash, and slip two fingers inside her. My snakebites rub over the smooth lips of her pussy, making her whimper. The water keeps

rushing, but there's a distinct fuckin' difference between that and her juices. Slick, hot, coating my lips and tongue.

Bella must've been in serious need of a man who knows what he's doing, 'cause it doesn't take many minutes before her thighs are trembling and her moans morph into gasps.

"Time to come, Bella," I murmur huskily and suck her clit into my mouth.

"Oh, oh, oh—fuck!" She falls apart with a hoarse scream, and when I look up, I see that she's got her hand clamped over her mouth. "I can't breathe," she pants.

When it's all over and I've lapped up the last of her arousal, I lower her to the bottom of the tub again and kinda expect her to be exhausted and sated in the way that she wants to cuddle. Women are like that. Usually. Make no fucking mistake, I like that, too. But not before *I* have come. I'm not gonna pretend and say that the woman's pleasure is enough. That's crazy people and liars talking shit like that.

But Bella isn't exhausted. If anything, she grows even more desperate. Once again, I find myself pressed against the tile wall, and what comes next is something I'mma beat off to for years.

"You like that, honey?" she asks innocently.

A moan and a jerky nod is all I can respond with. *Fuck yeah, I like it!*

It's not that she washes me—though it is strangely erotic and sensual—it's her hands gliding up and down my body, covered in suds, while she whispers all the things she wants to do to me, with me, for me...

"I want you to hold me down, pound into me..." That's as she's washing my chest.

When she snakes her hands around me and squeezes my ass: "I want to give you good-morning blowjobs."

Mother of...

My eyes nearly roll back. I'm hard as a fucking rock, and she's clearly in charge right now.

That's cool. For now.

The next line is delivered when she runs her soapy hands over my thighs. "It seems the only thing I've accomplished in a long time is conjuring up fantasies. Can I act them out with you?"

"Yesss," I hiss and buck my hips, needing her hands. On. My. Dick.

"Can I trust you to give it to me good, too?"

"Fucking hell, woman—you have no shame," I pant out, followed by a loud groan as she begins to rub my dick.

"Sorry." She smiles sheepishly and stops stroking me. "Sexually repressed mother here, remember? Want me to tone it down?"

"First of all—" I try to catch my breath "—put that hand back on my cock. *Now*. Second..." I moan, feeling her soft hand working me again. "The last thing I want...is for you—oh fuck, that's it—to tone it down." The teenager in me wants me to tell her she's "fucking awesome," but I push down that horny little fucker. Sensing that Bella wants it dirty, I go with something else instead. "How 'bout you get down on your knees, sweetheart?"

"Oh, yes," she breathes out, then drops to her knees. I lick my lips, watching her staring at my dick. Touching it. Then kissing it. Licking it. And sucking it into her mouth. "Mmmm..."

"*Fuck, Bella.*" I let out another moan and scrub my hands over my face.

Whatta fuckin' MILF I've caught.

All while bobbing her head up and down my cock, she cups my balls, tugs a little, and uses her free hand to grip the base of me. A tight hold that has me thrusting instinctively. But the seductive and encouraging look she sends me says it's more than okay. And yeah, this is definitely "more than okay." Any blowjob is a good blowjob, but some can take it to another level. It's the multitasking and Bella tightening her lips around me that does it. And fuck me, the way she uses her tongue...

"Almost there," I groan breathlessly and push into her mouth a little faster. Harder. Shallow thrusts. "Can I come on your tits, baby?" Looking and seeing them jiggling with her movements is almost too much. And I'm definitely a breast man.

Releasing me, she nods and breathes out an, "Of course." Next she cups her tits, causing me to spit out a curse. *Too fucking sexy.* Every muscle in me tenses up as I stroke myself roughly in front of her face.

When she pushes those breasts together and pinches her nipples, I can't hold back any longer. I manage to grit out a last warning, and then I'm coming. And coming. And coming. Watching through hooded eyes, I rub my cock through an explosive orgasm that marks her neck, chest, and tits with my cum.

It makes me feel possessive in a way I've never felt before.

One sexually repressed mother makes for one helluva freak between the sheets. Or in the shower, really. But I have every intention of claiming the shit outta her on her bed, too. In the back of my mind, I've also decided that no one but me will ever see this side of Bella ever again.

I'm panting and just focusing on regaining my control when Bella stands up and starts kissing my chest, then my collarbone, her hands locking

behind my neck. My pulse speeds up, and I gather her in my arms before dipping down to capture her mouth with mine. At the same time, I move us under the spray, content to make out like teenagers for a while.

"Amazing woman," I mumble against her lips.

She hums and slides a hand up in my hair, scratching my scalp. Again, my eyes nearly roll back. "Stay the night?" she asks softly, though there's still a good amount of lust in her voice.

"Oh yeah." I nod and nuzzle her jaw. "Someone's gotta give it you good, remembuh?" That someone's me, period. I grin and bury my face in the crook of her neck as she giggles. "And, baby? You won't be in charge in the bedroom." That's a fucking promise.

"Oh God," she whimpers. "Can we go right now?"

Eager little nymph. "Absolutely." I smack her ass. "Lead the way."

5

BPOV

I wake up in the middle of the night to Edward pressing his hard cock against my ass and leaving open-mouthed kisses along my neck and shoulder.

I shiver, and as if on cue, a rush of wetness dampens my pussy. "God. Again?"

After our shower last night, he showed me that he's the man who sure as hell can give it to me good. He fucked me like god, awakening parts of me I'm sure were never even awake when I was with Jasper. Edward is rough; he doesn't treat me like I'm made of glass. He threw me around like a damn rag doll, pushing me down on his thick cock, and... I mean, he

asked a lot if I was okay, and stuff like, "Can I do this?" and "Is this all right?" But yeah, he's rough and knows how to use our bodies to bring ultimate pleasure. In other words, I'm ready to lock him up and keep him for myself for the rest of my life.

"Damn straight," he murmurs huskily. "But we gotta problem. I'm outta rubbers. I could go out and buy—"

I lazily wave a hand at my nightstand. "There's a box in my drawer."

We've already used the two he had in his wallet. He was so fucking sexy when he rolled it on last night and winked and said, "I want my next kid to be planned."

So, that means we're good to go for more kids in the future. *Two thumbs up!*

'Cause I'm not letting this man go.

Stretching out on the bed, I purr like a cat and follow Edward's movements as he crawls over me and reaches for the condoms. Then he's back, positioning himself between my legs. While he rolls one onto his cock, he slides a finger down my slit, satisfied when he realizes I'm already wet.

"Fuck me, I'm starting to think you're as insatiable as I am," he mutters, softly running the pad of his thumb over my clit. I whimper in response and buck my hips, wanting more. "I swear, woman..." He shakes his head and huffs a chuckle. "You make me act like a fuckin' caveman."

I giggle drowsily and raise my eyebrows. "You mean you're not always this way?"

"Hell no." He laughs. "But around you, I lose my goddamn mind."

A surge of satisfaction settles in my gut.

"Now..." He slaps the head of his cock across my clit, and I cry out as a jolt of desire ricochets through me. *My fucking God!* "I gotta have you again." Covering my body with his, he hitches my legs around his waist and drives his cock deep.

"Fuck!" I throw my head back, digging it into the pillow, and push out my chest.

"And again," he groans and sets a fast pace. "And again..."

Oh, any-fucking-time, honey.

"Shit," he spits out. "This is gonna be fast. Fuckin' rubber's choking my dick. Buy bigger for next time."

"Gladly—*Jesus*," I hiss and swivel my hips, using my feet locked around him as leverage. "Oh God, Edward!"

"Or better yet," he grunts, sliding out slowly. "Let's skip condoms." He drops his forehead to my shoulder and slams in. "We'll get tested and shit."

I laugh breathlessly and nibble on his earlobe. "Isn't that what you do when you've been together awhile?"

He lifts his head, shoots me a grin, and lowers his mouth to my breasts. "It's what you do when you fuckin' commit, baby."

One hard suck on a nipple has me arching off the bed, a fiery sensation traveling straight to my pussy.

I moan like a whore, lost in pleasure. "Does that mean..."

"Yes." His gaze softens and he moves up again to kiss me. "You told me you've fantasized about me for the past six weeks?" I nod. "Yeah, well, so have I—fantasized about you, I mean. And I don't do tiptoeing or whatevuh. If I wanna know something, I ask. None of that..." He groans when I clench down around him. "Fuck," he grits out. "None of that 'does she like me, does he like me' bullshit. Damn, gimme another squeeze, sweetheart." I do, and he speeds up. "That's it—and..." He pants. "You're the good kind of fuckin' crazy, so I'm gonna keep you."

I'm giddy and horny—the best combination, I swear. "Consider yourself taken then, too."

"Well, obviously." He chuckles, out of breath, and grinds his pelvis over my clit. "Fucking beautiful. When you come—Christ." He's about to see me come. All I need is a little bit more...oh yeah. He slips a hand between us and rubs my clit in persistent circles. "Yeah, that's it, baby. Lemme feel you." He starts pounding into me, his hot breath near my ear. "You hear how soaked you are?" Oh, I definitely hear it. "My cock is fucking drenched, Bella."

"Close," I cry out.

A few deep thrusts later, he makes me come so hard that I actually lose my breath. My lungs burn as the ripples of my climax bring me down. In the background, I can hear him coming, too, but I'm too far gone to think about anything other than my own pleasure. At the peak of my orgasm, I'm completely rigid in his arms, but then it fades slowly, leaving my arms and legs all jelly-like.

If this is my future, I can't wait to live it.

~oOo~

I'm far from rested when I wake up a few hours later, but there's still a sense of serene calm in me. Padding off to the bathroom, I use the toilet, brush my teeth, wash my face, and put some cover-up on the bruise on my calf. It looks like it's going to be hot day, and the last thing I want is to change into pants. But my little Karate Kid will feel bad if he sees the barely-there bruise.

At first I have no idea what I'm even doing up—especially not when I have a naked Edward sleeping in my bed—but then it hits me. Perhaps like a motherly radar.

Willow is in Justin's room, and she's definitely up.

After getting dressed in a pair of denim shorts, a sports bra, and a loose t-shirt, I make my way to my son's room, smiling at the sound of Willow's giggling and cooing. I wouldn't mind letting her play in there, but Justin's toys might not be good for her. For instance, he's completely hooked on LEGOs, and I let him play with them when I'm there to supervise.

Otherwise, he's still too young for the smaller pieces. They're all packed in a box and kept way out of his reach, but maybe there's something else Willow can get her hands on.

Opening the door, I spot her in Justin's race-car bed playing with a few of his stuffed animals.

Whew. Someone needs a fresh diaper.

"Willow?" I say softly, and she spins around on the bed so fast that she almost falls over. I chuckle under my breath and walk closer. "Good mornin', sweetie. You woke up in a strange bed, huh?" I squat down next to the low bed, not wanting to scare her. I doubt she remembers me from yesterday.

"Dada?" She cocks her head.

I smile. "He's asleep. How about I help you with a new diaper and then we can go wake him up?"

Her forehead creases. "Ummm."

"My name is Bella." I point to myself. "I'm Daddy's friend."

"Bewwa—la..." She tests it out, looking so damn cute. Her eyes aren't as green as Edward's but close.

"That's right." I smile in approval. "So, how about a new diaper?"

"Big gurl," she says confidently. "I tan do it—only me."

Oh, I've heard that before. Your kid will tell you he or she can do it without help and then you end up with shit all over the place.

"Okay, you do it and I'll help just a little." I pinch two fingers together to show how little.

"Ummm, otay." She holds out her arms for me.

I grin and pick her up, quickly finding her diaper bag in the living room, and then I carry her back to Justin's room. He only wears pull-ups at night now—and not even every night—so I don't have a changing table anymore. But his bed will do just fine.

After spreading a towel on it, I use one of Willow's baby wipes on my hands and tell her to lie down. She just plops down, and I clean her up before taking out a fresh diaper from the bag. And with instructions and compliments like, "Oh, you already know this," I guide her with the diaper, making it seem like she's doing all the work.

"Such a good girl!" I praise, helping her fasten the tabs. "You were right. You can do this all on your own."

She beams with pride. "I tolded so."

"You sure did," I chuckle and pick her up. "Now, how about waking up Daddy?"

She nods. "I'm hungwy."

"We'll definitely get started on breakfast soon," I agree. But since I don't know what Edward gives her or if they have any special routines, I figure it's best to ask him before. Once we're in my bedroom, I distract Willow for a second just to make sure Edward's all covered up, and he is, so I walk over to the bed. "I think Daddy needs to see for himself how good you did with the diaper," I whisper to her.

Her eyes grow wide, and she nods. "Dada gots'ta know."

I barely contain a fit of giggles as I lower her to sit on Edward's face.

Willow doesn't contain anything, though. She squeals and wriggles her butt. "Wakey pakey!"

"Ohhhhhhh," he groans in protest. "That better be a clean fu—diaper." I hear how he sniffs. "Thank God." Then, with a little shove, he pushes a giggling Willow off him. "That was so mean, Bella. C'mea'." Before I can even take a step, he reaches out and pulls me down on the bed with him. "You thought that was funny, didn't you?" His voice is all gruff and full of sleep. I laugh as he pokes me in the ribs. "Angel, come and tickle Bella. I'm too tired."

Willow actually huffs. "You push-ed me!"

Edward yawns. "You sat on my face. We're even."

"She just wanted to be nice and show you how well she did with the diaper," I tell him, winking at Willow. "You should be happy."

"Yeah, Dada. Happy!"

"Oh, I'm freaking thrilled," he grumbles. "Thrilled that I have *two* girls bustin' my balls now."

When I look at him, though, he's smiling. Closed eyes and a soft smile.

I have a feeling falling in love with this man is going to be effortless.

"But thank you for changing her," he whispers. "You didn't hafta do that."

"I didn't mind." I grin and poke his nose, causing him to scrunch his face together and whine. "Such a baby."

"Shuddup."

"Yeah, yeah," I say. "We're hungry." It's still pretty early, but now I'm suddenly itching to see my son. "I was thinking we could eat something quick here and then pick up Justin?" I bite down on my lip.

He cracks one eye open and smiles lazily. "I gotta bettuh plan."

6

EPOV

As soon the teenager with too much acne has prepared the first tray of food, I grab a hot wing, 'cause I'm fucking starving. Justin peers up at me with his mother's eyes, and I crack a grin and offer him one, too. His look tells me something along the lines of, "*Eating? Before we get to the table? We can do that?*"

"It's hot, buddy," I warn him and wrap a napkin around a wing. He grabs it eagerly, a silly smile on his face. Too damn cute. And then Acne Kid is back to tell me that my daughter's cinnamon twists will be a while longer. I smirk and tap my watch; Bella told me in the parking lot that if they

don't deliver within ninety seconds, you get a free meal worth five bucks. And a free meal is like winning the lottery in my humble opinion.

"You might as well pick a meal, sir," Acne Kid sighs. "We're swamped today."

So, I get another meal that has hot wings, 'cause Justin's devouring his. I gotta feeling his fried chicken's gonna go untouched. Well, at least until I get my hands on it. My nana calls me a garbage disposal—she says the same about CJ, actually—because we eat all the food until there's nothing left.

"I ordered more of 'em—want another?" I ask Justin.

He nods, grinning like he's won some prize. "Yes, please." Bella raised one polite kiddo. I hand him another wing. "Thanks, Edwood."

I chuckle and finish my own wing, and when we're both done, I toss the bones on the tray.

Earlier, back at Bella's place, we gave Willow some grapes and chocolate milk; that was enough to sustain her until we'd picked up Justin at Bella's parents' house. And then I followed through with my plan—took them here to KFC/Taco Bell where it all began. Bella's sitting with Willow over by the window, and I can see that Bella shares my feelings about this place. It's so fucking loud and crowded, but the kids love it, and...I guess it does mean something to me now—this joint. I mean, I won't ever take her on a date here—'cause shit...it ain't *that* awesome, but maybe we can at least take our children here sometimes for breakfast. Whatever. Okay, lunch, not breakfast. Renee and Charlie didn't exactly say hi and bye when we came for Justin, so it took a little time.

Renee reminds me of Esme, so I can see why they're friends. Both chatty, both hopeless romantics, and both too fucking giddy at the possibility of being related through marriage one day.

Charlie's pretty cool, too. Once Bella told him what kind of bar I'm opening, he took me out to the garage and showed me his Harley.

Truth be told, I was a little nervous, but mostly because I showed up in basketball shorts and a t-shirt that Bella's brother's left at her apartment. But either Charlie didn't care or he didn't notice that it was his son's clothes I'm wearing.

"Here's your order, sir," Acne Kid says, appearing with the rest of our food.

"Thanks." I take the two trays and then tell Justin to grab onto the pocket of my shorts. I wouldn't wanna lose the kid in this crowd. I doubt that's the best way to impress Bella—*shit*. "Ah, buddy," I laugh, "don't pull 'em down, all right?" I don't wanna flash everyone in the restaurant.

"Oops," he giggles and loosens his hold. "I can carry de buwritos—Mommy say so sometimes."

"Yeah, okay." I guess he's like Willow and a lot of other children who just can't let their parents do everything for them.

"Edwood, can I carry Willow's juice also?" he asks.

"Sure." I grin and watch as he hugs the burritos to his chest and then grabs the juice in his free hand. His other hand never lets go of my pocket—a pocket that's now stained with the grease from his hot wing.

The life of a parent.

"There you guys are!" Bella smiles widely as we reach the table. Willow's bouncing impatiently on her lap. "Look, sweetie. So much food!"

"I want, Dada!" She grabs at air since I'm evidently too slow.

"Cool it, angel," I tell her, helping Justin into his seat. Then I sit down next to him and groan in relief, 'cause I'm a couch potato and enjoy sitting more than standing, and Bella starts dividing up the food. "Youse want extra wings?" I smirk at the way Bella's eyes light up.

"It took more than ninety seconds?"

I nod and grab my soda. "Yep." This bodes well for the future. If we go grocery shopping together, maybe she won't find me frustrating when I stop every time there's a free sample.

That shit's golden.

"Sweet. It rarely happens—unfortunately." She places a napkin on Willow's lap and then turns to Justin with the ketchup. "Okay, here's your ketchup, honey. Drench away."

"Does he like—" Never mind. Justin clearly *loves* ketchup.

He grins goofily and digs in.

Willow stares at him, and I already know it's coming. "Dada—"

"You want ketchup on your cinnamon twists?" I don't hide my grimace. "It won't be good, baby."

"I wan'sum!" she shouts.

"Ay! Remember what Nana Esme says?" I cock a brow. Admittedly, Esme says this to me and CJ all the time, too, but what-the-fuck-ever.

Bella's trying not to smile, but she fails, so she turns to the window for a sec.

Willow grumbles. "Mannuhs, mannuhs, mannuhs."

I nod. "That's right. Manners. Now, ask nicely."

"I want ketfupp, *pwease*."

I purse my lips, 'cause Bella's not the only one struggling to hide her amusement now, and I hand over the damn *ketfupp* to my little brat.

Bella has told me Justin can be a wild child, and I remember saying that last night—that he looks like he's got some mischief in him—but now I don't think it's true anymore.

He's so fucking polite and sweet and—

"Willow," Justin laughs, "you can put ketchup on walls. S'funny."

My eyebrows shoot up. *So much for all that sweetness.*

"*Justin*," Bella grits out. "Do you want a time-out? Or maybe we should skip the beach."

"I'm sowrry." Justin looks down.

"Oooh, Dada! Tan we—"

I scoff. "No."

"But I ask wiv *pwease*!"

A shake of my head. "No. The answer is no. No ketchup on the walls."

She huffs. "But—"

"Fuhgeddaboutit!"

"Sorry," Bella mouths, looking too damn apologetic.

I roll my eyes. If anything, I'm relieved. Willow's only had me so far; she needs to learn her goddamn manners. Finding out that Justin isn't perfect only makes me hopeful.

"Stop that crap," I tell her. She relaxes. "Now, tell me about this time-out business. I've heard of that before and I could use some pointers."

She lets out a breathy laugh, relaxing further. "Well, threats work. Mostly."

Over the table, I grab her hand and kiss her fingers. "Tell me more. Torturing our kids is what we live for, isn't it?"

"It's like you're my soulmate," she gushes.

I wink at her, and I have a feeling we're gonna make an awesome team. I'll even bet on it: by the time our kids are teenagers, they'll hate our guts.

The End